

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method for mapping a hierarchical data format with descriptors to a relational database management system is capable of handling diverse types of hierarchical descriptors in a fast manner for inserting descriptors, reading parts of descriptors, reading whole descriptors, and performing fast text queries. The descriptors are separated into portions of a common format, which are stored in a relation in the relational database. Together with the portions of common formats information describing the descriptor structure is stored in the relations. This information includes an indicator for a hierarchical level of portions of a common format within the descriptors and an indicator for a position of a next upper hierarchical portion of a common format within the descriptors.